

PRESS RELEASE

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COMPLETED RESTORATION OF STORM-DAMAGED STANTON AQUEDUCT MARKED WITH LAUNCH OF LANCASTER CANAL VIRTUAL TOUR

The completion of a £2.2 million project to restore storm-damaged Stainton Aqueduct in South Cumbria has been marked by its owners, the Canal & River Trust charity, with the launch of an exciting virtual tour along the disused Northern Reaches of the Lancaster Canal.

The online trip takes viewers on a four mile interactive journey from Hincaster to Crooklands, providing fascinating insights into the canal's history, wildlife, old working boats and impressive structures like Hincaster Tunnel and Stainton Aqueduct.

This online interactive canal archive, along with the restoration of Stainton Aqueduct, has been made possible thanks to a grant of £1.5 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, delivered in partnership with the Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership, and supported by grants from the Rural Payments Agency, South Lakeland District Council, Cumbria County Council and Kendal Town Council.

Stainton Aqueduct was originally constructed in 1816 to carry the Lancaster Canal over Stainton Beck, but suffered catastrophic damage in December 2015 when two destructive storms, Desmond and Eva, resulted in flood water washing away the upper towpath and apron, and causing part of the southern portal and wing walls to collapse.

The Trust, which cares for 2,000 miles of canals and river, is delighted to report the three year restoration of this important structure has now been completed.

Canal & River Trust project manager, Graham Ramsden said: "This has been a challenging repair project, including two unexpected delays caused by high river levels in both the winters of 2018 and 2019. We saved as much of the original stone as possible and stored it on site so we could reuse it, supplemented by a small amount of new stone sourced from a nearby quarry to ensure a close match in colour and texture.

"Restoration work has included constructing new cast concrete wing walls and apron, plus highly skilled stone mason repairs to the arch barrel ceiling, decorative archway spandrel and voussoirs stones. It has been a real labour of love to ensure we preserved the

aqueduct's unique character while ensuring the structure was repaired to top 21st century civil engineering standards.”

Supporting the restoration of this important heritage structure has been a major community engagement project led by Carrie House, Lancaster Canal Towpath Trail project officer, and Canal & River Trust heritage adviser Bill Froggatt.

Carrie explained: “This restoration project has been about far more than just mending a historic stone structure. With people currently restricted by the coronavirus pandemic, we hope the online virtual tour will make it easy for everyone to explore the newly restored aqueduct and the wider legacy of this wonderful waterway, so rich in heritage and fantastic scenery.”

For more information about the Canal & River Trust and the Lancaster Canal please go to <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/canal-and-river-network/lancaster-canal> or follow this link for the new virtual tour: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/481ae744cf75473b9f40123eb628c802>.

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Notes to Editors:

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day
www.canalrivertrust.org.uk.

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